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## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

THE pages of the April number of the *Jewish Quarterly Review* are brightened by an interesting and carefully written article on the important subject of "Jewish Religious Education." In breadth of view and in treatment there is nothing to be desired from the standpoint of the accomplished authoress. Her personality throughout the article appears without a suspicion of egotism, and her frankness is very charming. Her position among religious thinkers is easy to define. She must be regarded as a representative of the Broad School, and is considerably in advance of the so-called orthodox party. Her opinions are shared by a large number of moderate and sensible persons, and there is a great merit in moderation and good sense. Her position, perhaps, is best described as in the middle of the advancing, rather than the advanced, party.

But with all Mrs. Lucas's breadth of view and intelligence, it must be confessed that her opinions are far too much the conventional opinions of the day. In the present condition of religious thought something more than the expression of conventional opinions is needed. The difficulties of religious education for the young are admitted to be very great, and these difficulties are increasing rapidly. The difficulty of harmonising modern thought with religious ideas, such as inspiration and revelation, taxes to the very utmost the resources of parents and teachers. The exactness of scientific methods cannot be applied in the miraculous histories which are the subjects of religious education, and disappointment is felt that Mrs. Lucas has not touched upon these difficulties. Indeed, it may be

asked very respectfully whether she has contributed anything to a solution of the difficulties which she was bound to face. With every desire to give an affirmative reply, it is only possible to say that the real difficulties of religious education remain unsolved and untouched.

"My Judaism is the Judaism of the Pentateuch," is the frank avowal of the authoress; and she goes on to say, "that the record of the early history of Israel has been preserved in the Bible, together with a number of laws, which though they do not appear to be all of the same value, are yet due to the will of God and to God's inspiration." It is no exaggeration to say that every line of that passage bristles with difficulties. It is perilous enough to pledge one's belief to the truth of the "early history of Israel," as narrated in the Pentateuch. It is also very ambiguous. Is it intended to include the Patriarchal period? If it be so, the value of the narrative is greatly diminished by the references to angels, which stamp the mythical character of the history. But probably Mrs. Lucas desires to limit her belief in the early history of Israel to later times; however, she expresses her belief "in God's election of the people of Israel to be proclaimers of his unity," which would carry her belief back to the period of Abraham. It would be impossible to point out any strictly Jewish dogma more difficult to teach than the doctrine of the election of the descendants of Abraham as "the chosen people." The stories in the Book of Genesis concerning the Almighty's dealings with Abraham are not only unteachable at the present day, but to calm and impartial minds the narratives are entirely *unthinkable*. It is much to be regretted that Mrs. Lucas did not inform her readers how she could present to intelligent children as historic truths the marvellous scenes alleged to have occurred on the plains of Mamre. The legendary character of that narrative is proved by the reference to angels. What is an angel? A creature of the imagination with no actual existence. Every narrative in which angels play

their part is discredited, and can only be regarded as un-historic and untrustworthy. It is impossible to ignore the antecedent difficulties and improbabilities of the doctrine of selection, and if the chief support from the sacred narrative should fail, how can the doctrine be maintained? how can it be taught? Subsequent reference to this doctrine in various parts of the Pentateuch lends very little support to the historic value of the scenes described in Genesis. The later writers speak of the tradition, and do not and cannot testify to the truth of the promise made by God to Abraham, which rests on the authenticity of events, which no evidence can establish and no tradition confirm. It is not intended, on the present occasion, to dwell at any length on this, the primary and fundamental doctrine of conventional Judaism. The object of the writer is to direct attention to other difficulties of religious education of equal magnitude and perhaps of greater importance.

Mrs. Lucas expresses her opinion "that in the Pentateuchal narrative, between the Exodus from Egypt and the death of Moses, we have a record of divine revelation and a code of divinely given laws for our religious and moral guidance." This statement of belief constitutes her platform, and with the greatest respect for the authoress, it cannot be improper to inquire whether the position thus assumed can be logically maintained, and can be made the basis of religious education. It would appear that Mrs. Lucas herself has some doubts as to the strength of her position, for in the following passage she attempts to lessen the effects of advancing destructive criticism by the very remarkable statement "that her belief would not be lessened if it were mathematically proved that Moses were not the actual author of the Pentateuch, nor increased if the reverse were as absolutely demonstrated." It is almost unnecessary to point out that this extraordinary statement involves the anomaly that the authenticity of the Scriptures is independent of testimony. It is very important, however, to state that Mrs. Lucas, in her efforts

to free herself from the conclusions of destructive criticism, assumes the equal value of contemporary history (which Scripture claims to be) and of oral traditions—reduced to writing many years after the events which they affect to describe. If Moses were not the author of the Pentateuch, some other person or persons must have written in his name, with or without his authority. If the Pentateuch were actually written after the death of Moses, and without his authority, but in the age of Moses, it was not faithful history, and implies a desire to impose upon the credulity of the people by the weight and veneration of a great name. If the Pentateuch were committed to writing long after the death of Moses, it deals with traditions, and its value and authenticity are greatly diminished. In fact, the difference in the value of Scriptures claiming to be contemporary history, and of traditions reduced to writing, consists in the ascertainment of the period at which the traditions were reduced into writing. After the lapse of long periods of time the difference of value may be enormous. Contemporary events narrated by an eye-witness may be truly and faithfully recorded. Events described after the lapse of centuries by writers who trusted to tradition or unauthentic records can hardly be regarded as trustworthy history. If the death of Moses, and the reduction into writing of the Laws of Moses were separated by six or eight centuries, the value of the tradition is relatively small. If the reduction into writing were near to the events alleged, the evidential value is proportionately raised. Thus the value and relative authenticity of the Scriptures depend entirely on the evidences of time of publication as well as of authorship. These important questions cannot be disposed of as Mrs. Lucas desires. The difficulties of authorship and date of publication have to be met, and the questions of inquiring students have to be answered.

Important as this branch of the subject undoubtedly is, the chief object of the writer is to examine the

doctrine of "Inspiration from the educational point of view." What is inspiration? How can we realise the idea ourselves? How can we present the idea to those we are teaching? It is very easy to speak of inspiration in words—so-and-so is divinely inspired. Are there existing ideas in our minds corresponding to the words used? In the first place, it is proper to note that Mrs. Lucas does not believe in verbal inspiration. The doctrine of verbal inspiration represents the inspired individual as a sort of amanuensis writing mechanically words coming into his mind by divine purpose. There is something crude and unsatisfactory in this doctrine, and it is now giving way to the doctrine of plenary inspiration, which is the more modern form of the religious dogma of inspiration. The difficulties of the older form of belief are not in the least diminished, but the greater vagueness and uncertainty in realising the idea of plenary inspiration, obviously give the newer form of the doctrine many advantages. According to the current theology, it is the form of the doctrine of inspiration, in which it is now proper to believe. What is plenary inspiration? How can we form in our minds a conception of the idea? What are the tests of plenary inspiration? How are we guarded against fraud and imposition? What is the criterion of the truth of the doctrine? Where are the evidences? A teacher of religion is bound to offer satisfactory answers to these questions, or to admit that the subject transcends our faculties. If he adopt the latter alternative, he should be classed as an agnostic, and he had better abandon the belief altogether, for it must never be forgotten that belief is an intellectual operation, and without the sanction of mind, there is no true belief. Words may express belief, but the mind gives none without conviction. How do ideas arise in the brain? The brain is the great thinking organ; by some action within the brain, an idea is generated. In order to generate an idea, some change in the brain must take place. The modified state of brain is the antecedent, and the idea is

the consequent. Without such modification of the brain, no idea will arise. According to Psychologists, as every movement of the body is preceded and accompanied by a modification of nerve and muscle, so every action of the mind—the sole organ of which is the brain—is preceded and accompanied by some modification of the brain. What that modification is, is still uncertain, but Psychologists are convinced that cause and effect follow in mental operations with as much certainty and regularity as in all other physical actions. Assuming, therefore, that every mental operation has its cause or antecedent, what is the factor or what is the antecedent in the production of an idea due to inspiration? In other words, what is the antecedent to the production of the idea coming to the brain *ab extra*?

The ordinary action of the brain is suspended; a new factor is introduced. The divine will, acting upon or through the brain, generates the idea in the human mind. If this be true, how is the influence of the divine inspiration made cognisant? How is it that the ordinary factors of ideas are superseded and a new factor is introduced? This question is the pivot upon which the whole belief in inspiration should turn. If the doctrine be true, what is the test of its truth? How can the inspired individual make it clear to himself, and be certain that the ideas in his mind are *not* generated within his own mind, but are generated by divine will? It is necessary to guard against both fraud and mistake. Enthusiasm and fanaticism cause strange freaks in the action of human minds. Imposition and wilful deception may occasionally occur. It is essential to know, and be able to distinguish the human idea from the divinely-inspired idea, and to establish some test by which we can recognise the differences of the one idea from the other. In the history of the world many wise and good men have claimed to be inspired of God. Their pretensions have been accepted by some nations and rejected by others. Who were right? The thoughts of many of these men claiming to be divinely

inspired are sublime and holy. What is the criterion which distinguishes Moses from Asoka, from Zoroaster, from Mahomet, and from others (not referring to Jesus of Nazareth)? Is there any criterion which includes Moses and excludes other claimants to divine inspiration? It is sufficiently clear that there is and can be no such test or criterion of inspiration. The doctrine of divine inspiration has been accepted by a credulous world without question, and maintained throughout the ages without difficulty and without doubt.

A new mode of regarding Scripture seems to be coming into vogue, which, while diminishing many of the difficulties of ordinary systems of interpretation, greatly attenuates the value of inspiration. The new method consists in accepting the theory of gradual development, admitting it may be carried out by non-inspired writers working on a *divine plan*. This mode of viewing Scripture has obviously a twofold advantage. It concedes much to the advocates of evolution, and admits the theory of historic development. It also diminishes to a very great extent the difficulties of a belief in direct inspiration. "What we may suppose to have happened," says Mr. C. Gore in *Lux Mundi*, is that "Moses himself established a certain germ of ceremonial enactment in connection with the ark and its sacred tent, and with the 'Ten words,' and that this developed always as 'the Law of Moses,' the whole result being constantly attributed, probably unconsciously, and certainly not from any intention to deceive, to the original founder. . . . If we believe that the law, as it grew, really did represent the divine intention for the Jews, gradually worked out on the basis of a Mosaic institution, there is nothing materially untruthful, though there is something uncritical in attributing the whole legislation to Moses acting under the divine command." It would seem that the author of the above passage sees nothing materially untruthful in a pious fraud attributing to Moses the legislative work of a later author on the plan



of Moses. It is sad to witness the intellectual, and indeed moral torsion which is deemed necessary in order to harmonise the theory of development in connection with Mosaic legislation with the doctrine of divine inspiration. Would Mr. Gore regard it "as not materially untruthful" to attribute to Lord John Russell, long since dead, the extension of the franchise in 1884, because the later legislation was to some extent on the plan of Lord John Russell's reform legislation of 1832? The Rev. C. Gore goes on to say, that "what we are asked to admit is not conscious perversion, but unconscious idealising of history, the reading back into past records of a ritual development which was really later." To the secular mind the difference between "unconscious idealising of history," as suggested, and pious fraud, is infinitely small. To Mr. Gore it becomes a method of interpretation; to the ordinary inquirer it is a discreditable practice. If a later writer uses the name of Moses, and assumes the authority of Moses, the act may or may not be *pious*, but it certainly is an imposition upon those who are deceived. These questions of direct inspiration and of gradual development involve sufficient difficulties to appal the educator of the young. Until the teacher has satisfied his own mind, how can he teach? In the present condition of theology no intelligent pupil can be told that inspiration is a truth which must be accepted without question, or that the authenticity of the Mosaic dispensation is above and beyond doubt. To be respected by our pupils we must be honest. To be honest we must admit doubt.

The next part of the subject which obviously is reached, is the question of Revelation. The difficulties of belief in Revelation are hardly less than those in the doctrine of Inspiration. Let us ask what is revealed. Is it knowledge so occult that it lies beyond the discovery of human intellect? Or is it only the anticipation of human discovery? It is extremely difficult, indeed it is impossible to mention any part of revelation that contains knowledge

which is undiscoverable by unaided human intelligence. For the purposes of this inquiry it will be sufficient to divide the subject into Revelation of moral truths and Revelation introducing religious ceremonial.

With regard to the revelation of moral truths, it is quite untrue that the moral principles included in the Decalogue were unknown to the world until the time of Moses. The origin of moral laws is a sufficiently difficult inquiry, with which, fortunately, we are not engaged; but it is abundantly clear that the moral principles contained in the ethical part of the Decalogue were well known among and practised by the Egyptian and other peoples long before the age of Moses. The moral ideas contained in the Decalogue are so simple and so fundamental that it is difficult to imagine any civilised or semi-civilised society existing without rules of conduct similar to those so grandly expressed in the Decalogue. And as a matter of history it was so. There is no evidence whatever that the great ancient monarchies were established without a moral basis to the laws by which the peoples were governed. The evolution of moral ideas from the historical point of view may be a question of extreme difficulty, but most thinkers agree that moral rules of conduct were at a very early age established for the guidance of mankind. One of the most interesting of all problems in the long history of civilisation is the influence of moral ideals and moral principles upon national legislation, and few will doubt that civilisation has been greatly advanced by the recognition of and adherence to moral ideas. The chief aspect of the alleged revelation of fundamental moral principles would seem to be *not* so much the introduction of new principles not previously known, as the high sanction obtained for such principles. It is obvious that the importance of a Divine sanction—the authority for the law—cannot be over-estimated, and it must be conceded that such sanction has exercised a most beneficial influence on the progress of civilisation. But is it true? The question before us is not the advantages of revelation

but the truth of revelation. It must be admitted that the moral ideas contained in Scripture are of the greatest beauty, expressed in the sublimest language. Indeed, the beneficial effects referred to would not have been obtained without a moral grandeur in the Law and the Sanction.

But regarding the Pentateuch as a whole, and teaching the Mosaic legislation as a code of divinely-inspired laws, we are bound to regard another side, upon which the world has expressed in no measured terms its signal disapproval. The moral law upon which so much admiration may be expressed is associated with a ceremonial law and with a caste-priesthood, the evil influences of which, if the system had succeeded, would have been enormous. With regard to the ceremonial law, it is proper in the first instance to point out that it never seems to have occurred to the author or authors of the multitudinous forms of ceremonials which the Pentateuch introduced or copied from neighbouring nations, that ceremonies are but fashions, useful for a time, but giving way, later, to newer and more appropriate forms. The ceremonial law of the Pentateuch was evidently intended to last for ever. It is needless to cite passages in proof of this statement; the whole theory of the Levitical code is that a code of ceremonial law is established, which should never be altered. Any ceremonial law assuming to be fitted for all time stands condemned. Progress and change are the law of the universe. A stable ceremonial law may be in accordance with Oriental ideas, and may have been the desire of ancient lawgivers, but absolute unchangeability is not the law which governs the universe. It is one of the most remarkable features of the Jewish people, whom it is no exaggeration to say, are one of the most intellectual people in the world, that they still profess their belief in the permanency of the ceremonial law, and teach it to the young from generation to generation, while they are as completely permeated as any European people with modern ideas of progress, and the present inappropriateness of the Levitical

code. If we would, we could not regard the ceremonial law of the Pentateuch with any respect or favour. The world has outgrown the belief in religious ceremonials, and no effort can restore that which has so completely passed away. Is it honest to attempt to preserve a mock and hollow belief in such laws as divinely inspired? Is it honest to teach to our children the doctrine that Eastern ceremonials of great antiquity were commanded by the great Almighty to the Jewish people, when we know the contrary is the truth? In the near future it may be hoped that a great change will take place in Jewish belief in this respect. There are, in the Pentateuch, many features very much worse than the establishment of a complex ceremonial law. There is the institution of an hereditary caste priesthood. It is quite needless at the present day to denounce the sacerdotal system. All honest thinkers of all creeds, and in all countries, are agreed that the sacerdotal system is most inimical to the best interests of society. Great thinkers have expressed in unmistakable terms their abhorrence of priestcraft and the systems with which priests are associated. Priests are everywhere, and in every age, the enemies of human progress, and the foes of human knowledge. They flourish where ignorance is found, and they fight step by step against the advances of science; yet the most implacable system that has ever been invented was intended for the Hebrew people by the authors of the priestly code. This system, so harmful in all its details, is one which is "still taught to our children as emanating from divine intelligence." Will our children look with respect on us if we admit (as we are forced to do) that the system cannot be regarded with favour, and that we are very glad it never succeeded? The sacerdotal system attempted to be established by the Levitical or priestly code was not a new system. It was copied, with certain modifications, from the neighbouring nations. The elaborate system of sacrifices connected with the priestly system was possibly appropriate

for the times at which it was introduced, but will anyone contend that it represents a high form of culture, or is compatible with the higher forms of civilisation? The institution of a caste priesthood and the sacrificial system, established or confirmed by the Levitical code, bear every indication of the work of men's hands — men, too, who had not a far outlook into the future, but who, like most Orientals, believed in the permanency of established systems. It is hardly a cynical remark, that those who contend that the Levitical system is inspired by God are bound to explain how it happens that the scheme of revelation always follows on Semitic lines, and is largely drawn from Semitic sources.

However grand and sublime the moral code of the Pentateuch may be, it can hardly be doubted that the legislation as a whole is discredited by the priestly system, with which it is inseparably associated. From the educational point of view, the difficulties of reconciling the priestly system of the Pentateuch with the secular ideas of modern political science are well-nigh impossible, and these are difficulties which the honest teacher is bound to face. Indeed, the dilemma presented by the irreconcilable contraries is either that the priestly system is not a revelation from the Almighty, or that God ordained a system that hopelessly failed, and has since been discredited by all thoughtful persons.

The sublimest parts of Scripture are those that deal with man's relation to his Creator. The treatment of such a transcendental subject does not allow of proofs and verification. Whatever may be the moral significance of the laws relating to holiness, the subject is not one for exact treatment, or for which we can demand certainty. Hence the very wide margin which must be conceded to conjecture and theory. The exhortations of the writers of Scripture appeal much more to conscience than to reason. And it would be idle to require verification respecting subjects where it is impossible to supply

it. Hence it is that theology can never rank as an exact science. It occupies ground in the elevated regions of vagueness and uncertainty, and for those who are unable to believe, no proofs can be offered, and no certainty of truth can ever be attained.

It is not desired to avoid the subject of miracles. Miracles are at the present day the difficulty rather than the support of the theologian. The want of historic certainty in all ancient records diminishes to vanishing point the value of alleged miracles. Religious histories are everywhere full of wonders and miracles, but no trustworthy evidence is ever forthcoming in order to establish a miracle. Assuming that Almighty Providence could alter the course of nature if he desired to do so, the question is, Has he done so? It is a question of fact to be dealt with by appropriate evidence, as every other question of fact. It is hardly too strong a statement that no Biblical miracle approaches the necessary test of trustworthiness. All narratives of miracles are very much of the same character and none give the guarantees of accuracy and historical truthfulness which are needed in order to establish a suspension of the natural laws which appear to govern phenomena. In the course of religious education the Jewish teacher will be compelled to regard supernatural religion from the Jewish point of view, *as a whole*, and to form some estimate of the system as a factor in the progress of civilisation. From the tenour of the previous remarks, no very exalted opinion of such a system *as a whole* can be formed. The object of every religious system should be to raise the level of humanity, and fit man to rise to higher forms of civilisation. In order to accomplish these great objects, it is necessary to possess high ideals and lofty standards of conduct. Throughout the whole of Scripture the sentiment most praised, and that which is most prominent, is obedience. The crimes of King David are condoned to a great extent in consequence of his obedience to the Divine Will. Obedience doubtless is a fine sentiment, and obedience

to the Will of God leads to resignation and submission to unseen powers. It is a virtue on the passive side of human nature, and does not incite to heroic actions or to nobleness of conduct. The active virtues are the true influences in the progress of civilisation, and they are relatively neglected, and the more passive qualities are unduly preferred. Hence it may be inferred that the Jewish system would never have greatly aided in the advance of civilisation. It is well worthy of repetition that the legislation of the Pentateuch is almost wholly in accordance with Semitic ideas and Oriental habits. There is a narrowness quite incompatible with the general advance of civilisation. The entire dependence—as contemplated in the Pentateuch—on supernatural support and interference would have checked, if not destroyed, the progress of knowledge, and the great triumphs of science would never have taken place under a priestly system. By the failure of the Jewish system the world has been saved a great calamity, for it can hardly be questioned that the Pentateuchal Legislation contemplated a system entirely opposed to the modern ideas of progress, and the advance of civilisation. Indeed it is no exaggeration to say that all that the modern world regards as the greatest successes of modern thought and modern practices would have been impossible under the system attempted to be carried out by the Hebrew Legislators. If that system had not been destroyed by the successive conquerors of Judæa it would have succumbed to the inherent difficulties of harmonising an ancient Oriental religious system with advancing secular ideas. To imagine its extension over the whole world is to imagine universal decay and not progress as the destiny of mankind. It is difficult to understand how at the present day any honest teacher can be found who can conscientiously maintain the divine origin of the Levitical Code and the Priestly system thereby established. If, as some moralists teach us, the value of a thing is best estimated by imagining ourselves deprived of it, let us imagine ourselves without those

possessions of secular knowledge, which we value, and rightly value, so highly; all our stores of knowledge swept away, all our mechanical inventions lost to us, for in the eyes of many theologians, the powers of nature are the attributes of God, and not the servants of man. Indeed it must not be forgotten that the rapid advance during the last three centuries in knowledge and power, and in all that constitutes modern civilisation, has been made in opposition to, and in defiance of those religious ideas which underlie the Jewish system. The advance of scientific knowledge limits and curtails the belief in the supernatural interferences, and as the former advances the latter recedes. The conflict between modern ideas and supernaturalism is only beginning, notwithstanding three centuries of scientific discovery, and no one can doubt the issue. The opponents of the old system are bold and aggressive, their arguments cannot now be ignored. The current literature is full of the attacks of the rationalists upon conventional religious belief, and the replies are weak and half-hearted. The schools and colleges, to which young Jews are sent, follow the direction of the intellectual current, and disbelief is unconcealed if not avowed in all the abodes of learning. Is religious education to disregard the signs of the times? To do so would be to live in a fool's paradise. The difficulties of the day have to be met. The youth of the Jewish community cannot be put off by evasive answers, or by reference to the traditional explanations of supernatural events. The conventional modes of treatment are no longer of any avail. It is indispensable to meet reasonable objections with reasonable explanations. The time is come when an effort must be made to harmonise modern scientific thought with ancient religious ideas, and it is greatly to be regretted that Mrs. Lucas has not made any attempt in that direction.

There is another kind of Judaism to which Mrs. Lucas has not referred, and which is different to any form of Judaism mentioned in her article: *It is the Judaism of the*



*future.* There have been sneers at the prediction of the near advent of Cosmopolitan Monotheism. The Judaism of the future will be historical Monotheism.

The great conflicts now taking place between modern thought and ancient religious ideas must, sooner or later, involve the whole of the platform of traditional Judaism. If Jews desire to maintain their well-won character as an intellectual people they must take part in this conflict.

It will not be out of place to refer again to some of the results of modern criticism, in order to indicate clearly the position of the modern critical school. It may well be conceded that, in various matters of detail, critics are not altogether agreed. But in most of the essential parts of the subject there is little substantial difference of opinion.

The Pentateuch is not believed to be the work of Moses. It is not the work of one author; it is a built-up composition. The precise periods at which the several parts of the Pentateuch were written or published may be doubtful, but it is clear that several centuries elapsed, after the death of Moses, before the "Five Books" were in the possession of the Jews: possibly seven or eight hundred years. It is difficult to estimate the importance of this fact in lowering the authenticity of the Sacred Books. The first part of the Pentateuch which appeared is probably Deuteronomy, which may have been written and published six centuries after the death of Moses. Leviticus, or the Priestly Code, appeared two to three centuries later. The early history of the Hebrew people is to a great extent legendary. It is very possible that the patriarchs are mythological personages. It is almost certain that their histories are gathered from various sources, and are altogether untrustworthy. The period of literary activity and reduction into writing of traditions, was the age which began with King Josiah, and ended with the return of the exiles from Babylon. During those years historical Judaism was formed. Since the age of the Septuagint it has hardly varied. The reality of the Sinaitic Legislation is very doubtful, and the

whole story of the Tables of Stone is probably legendary. Enough has been stated to indicate the peril of traditional Judaism. What is the value of traditions? Their value depends on surrounding circumstances. It may be very great. It can be reduced to nothing. It need not be doubted that ancient histories may be handed down for long periods of time, from generation to generation, by oral transmission, and without any writings whatever. It is alleged that in ancient Greece there were individuals who could recite the whole of Homer, and ancient Bards won their renown by astounding feats of memory. Many Hebrew traditions are doubtless of great antiquity. But where oral traditions are worth anything, they are not combined with written documents. The combination is a source of great danger. The Jews were a literary people, and reduced their traditions to writing. History tells us how they dealt with them, how narratives were expanded and embellished, and how ceremonials grew and were added to. The old traditions were immersed in the oceans of details of more recent commentators and editors. Hence Jewish traditions became of little value in proportion to the amount of the literary skill of those who reduced them to writing, and the oral traditions were lost in the plenitude of the literary efforts to preserve them. The critical methods of the new school of theologians are well known and need no explanation. The results of their labours are accumulating, and are passing downwards from the learned class to the general public. Are these results foolishness, or are they the outcome of a critical examination of the Scriptures conducted upon trustworthy methods? If the former be true, let the Jewish learned men advance their arguments and maintain the authenticity and integrity of Scripture. If the latter alternative is true, dogmatic Judaism is untenable, and an immense reform of thought and of practice cannot be far distant. The signs of the times all indicate a great cataclysm in religious belief. It is becoming more and more difficult to believe in supernaturalism. The Law of

Evolution is more and more applied in order to explain the growth of systems and the rise and fall of beliefs. How should we apply the new learning in explaining the development of Judaism ?

The fundamental idea of Judaism is Monotheism. It is unnecessary to question the great historical fact of the early appearance of the Monotheistic idea among the ancient Hebrews. It is extremely probable that the Monotheistic idea arose in the Abrahamic family. It is certain that for an immense period of time the descendants of Abraham regarded this idea as a precious gift of God, to be preserved in the family, in the tribe, in the nation, as a priceless inheritance. The desire to preserve that simple cult gave rise to the divergence of their religious ideas, from the conventional religious ideas of their cognates, the Syrian Semites. Rites and ceremonies, partly in accordance with, and partly differing from the Syrians, were the means by which the ancient Hebrews strove to safeguard their religious ideas. The dangers and subsequent destruction of the political state alarmed the prophetic school, and the Scribes, who feared the loss of the Monotheistic idea in the calamities attending the loss of national independence. Hence the reduction of all existing traditions, and the immense development of conservative laws at the time of the exile.

These laws were promulgated with two objects, and these still continue, viz., the separation of the race and the preservation of the idea. The Judaism of the future has no other objects. The beloved "Torah" was the means intended to accomplish these objects, and if the authenticity of the "Torah" should be impugned, will the fundamental doctrines of Judaism be affected ? By no means. The pure Monotheistic idea is becoming more and more the cult of the school of science, and is the only hope of the thoughtful physicist. The peculiar isolation of the Hebrew race, and the tenacity with which they have preserved the idea of Monotheism, are

historical facts beyond question. Those facts it is impossible to deny. But it is equally impossible to maintain the supernatural history with which those facts are associated. Racial characteristics will account for a great deal, peculiar conditions will explain much more of the strange and marvellous history of the Jews. No one desires to rob that history of its strangeness and its marvels; but modern thought will not admit the supernatural as an explanation of any historical phenomena. The change that has to come is a change more of the *point of view* from which the facts are regarded than in the facts themselves. No one would deny the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, but very many question the supernatural agencies by which the exodus is alleged to have been conducted. Very much has been made of the evidences of the sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt brought to light by the Egyptologists. These evidences undoubtedly strengthen the belief in the fact, which has not been denied, of that sojourn, but do not in the least support the allegations of supernatural agencies in the circumstances of the exodus. To remove the supernatural element from the Biblical narratives is the great reform of the near future. That reform will practically consist in converting supernatural history into marvellous history. It will deepen rather than weaken interest in the instructive and highly-suggestive evolution of the Monotheistic idea, and in the tragic fortunes of the descendants of the Patriarchs. But the question may be fairly asked, Will the modern Jews resent the loss of the supernatural in the history of the race? It may be hoped that calm consideration of the evidences will ultimately reconcile modern Jews to a change that elevates their ancestors and raises them to the heroic standard. That which is withdrawn from the supernatural must be added to the genius and greatness of the leaders of the ancient Hebrews. The history of the Jews regarded from the purely secular point of view, is a history of which any people may be justly proud, and which became glorious

through the martyrdom of its members, and the terrible sacrifices so freely made through centuries of persecution in order to preserve the integrity of the fundamental ideas of Judaism, and the purity of the race. The supernatural histories, the legends and the traditions were the "means" employed to preserve Israel. The jewel is as priceless as it ever was in the long history of the Jews; it is the setting alone which, in these modern times, is becoming of less value than it formerly possessed.

The history of the Jewish people need not be regarded as closed, even when such stupendous changes in thought shall have been effected, or their high destinies as played out and ended. As the custodians of a great and sublime idea, they will again be found in the front of religious thought. Formerly the pioneers through the dense labyrinth of ancient superstitions and inhuman practices, they will again become the leaders in a great religious revolution. The difficulties of religious belief, so often mentioned in these pages, affect equally and similarly all existing religious systems. The movement which is impending will involve all creeds and all classes. The fundamental idea of Judaism in such a movement will stand above the chaos which will attend the destruction of the conventional beliefs. That cherished idea will not be touched, and its existence will not be imperilled. The movement will be to a great extent obviously a destructive movement, but it will also be conservative. It will be a conservative movement, inasmuch as it will tend to preserve and perpetuate the belief in pure Monotheism. It will be a radical movement, so far as it will sacrifice and destroy ancient, worn out and valueless forms and ceremonies which are now out of joint with the times and irreconcilable with modern thought and practice. It will be a cosmopolitan movement, for it will seek to unite the wise and the thoughtful of every creed and clime in the one great and simple and all-sufficient cult—that of pure Monotheism. These are some of the burning questions of

the near future, questions which are second to none, from the educational point of view, and which now press for solution. They are inadequately brought forward in the foregoing pages in the earnest hope that more thought and more attention may be directed to problems of such importance and such magnitude, which for their solution may well require the united efforts of the most learned, the most conscientious and the most courageous of the present generation.

ALFRED G. HENRIQUES.

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